

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

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TO EMMA.

FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

"The only gift is a portion of thyself. Therefore let the farmer give his corn; the miner a gem; the sailor coral and shells; the painter his picture, and the poet his poem."

Were I, Sweet,
In very truth,
Such a Poet
As thy youth,
(Bright with hope
Of coming years,
Shaded hardly yet
By fears,
Needs to sing
A roundelay
Fitted for
Thy natal day.

I would weave
A chaplet rare,
Meet to deck
Thy sunny hair.
Pearls of Thought
Should there be strung,
Diamond sparks
Of Wit among
Flowers of Poetry
Should rest
On thy fair
And gentle breast.

But around me
As I sing,
Memories and
Are clustering,
And in truth, Dear,
I can say
Little worthy
Of thy day,
Only loving,
At thy feet,
Pier my tender
Wishes, Sweet.

Nov. 14th, 1866. CLARA VON MÜNCHINGER.

HEARTS ERRANT.

This was just the tone of Olive's mind as she lay back with closed eyes against the cushions of the railway-carriage on the journey back to Armistage Hall. Miss Urelda, from the opposite corner, watched the lines of the little pale face settle into a sweet peacefulness, and was very earnestly thankful. She had seen how, since Miss Hetty's unconscious lesson, the hard, bitter look which had once been so painful and grief to her had softened to a gentler phase; but she also saw that the battle was not yet fought out—that victory and peace were yet a long way off. That would be reached she had felt sure—but when? Miss Urelda understood the caution of the high, resolute spirit to know that it would never yield—that it must win or—Miss Urelda marked a sharpening of the delicate features, an ominous transparency of the complexion, which suggested the alternative to her, and sent a cold thrill of fear through her veins. Of such nature were matters made, she recognized.

But the strain was relaxed just in time. He was gone, and the struggle dropped. After the first sick pain of the parting—a pain which was more a sympathetic suffering for her than for herself—Olive was conscious of a sudden lull in the storm which had so long beaten upon her—of a revival calm taking the place of wild tumult. It was like the first throes of returning health, through a sick frame to feel how the first comfort came to the cheek, to the heart, to the eye, the old time, before it and everything had lost its bitterness for her. The moon rose over the green meadows as the train stole into them out of the gloomy pines of brick and mortar through which its path had first lain, for Clara, busied in shopping, had caused them to miss the six o'clock train, so that the long, lingering summer day had come to a close ere they left the station on their homeward way, and Olive felt, with a thrill of delight, that the power to rejoice in Nature's loveliness had come back to her. She was not enough experienced in sorrow to know that the wounds into which this calm had been poured are set for healing; but it was with an exquisite gladness that she looked out upon the silver light shimmering among the dewy leaves, and felt that the beauty of that moonlight scene brought to her a peace which it was weary to the back, and let all the peace and rest represented ideal to her soul. It might not last—nay, it would not, she knew that for there is this quality about a great shock of sorrow, that we never fully trust life again after it. The ground which has once opened at our feet may be broken up again only to suddenly, so we tread cautiously for ever afterwards. But the youth to which the trouble had been so strong and bitter, took this blessed respite with the same intense longing. The colors of life are so vivid to youth!

It would not be easy, perhaps, to define the cause of this sudden lightning of her burden. Gerald's absence could not bring back the trust which he had blighted; there had not yet been time for it to loosen the tenacious hold of the love which, to her shame and grief, she had found surviving the wreck of all else. A com-

moner mind than Olive's might have hoped something from such a separation and delay, but to Olive's there was nothing left to hope. It was, perhaps, the cessation of daily struggle and trial which had set the spirit free. The first blow had fallen and was over; nothing could ever bring back to life what that blow had killed; but the harassing, continual warfare was always going on. Whilst he remained before her eyes it must always go on. How all her true and honest nature had risen up sometimes against the specious deceptions, the brilliant, charming, seductive lines of which she must needs be the witness. How hard it had been to sit by and hear and see how all this, which was so false, was believed in and accepted—how it riveted faster and firmer the slavish chains which Clara had found it convenient to throw around her victim—how her own truth had suffered in being compelled to acquiesce in and sanction such falsehood! How could her woman's nature betray another woman, and yet how could her honor and her truth bear to see such things and be silent? There is an instinct in such cases which tells us how little speech will avail, and that we who dare to raise our voices to denounce the treachery will only bring down upon ourselves the contumacious which, at least, have not deserved. There is nothing for it but to leave the captives to buy their chains—the infuriated dreamers to dream on.

Well, all this was over, and when Olive awoke next morning the world seemed all before her. Her heart gave a great bound, as a returned exile's might do at sight of the well-remembered shore, when she raised the blind of her window and saw the full-risen morning lying splendid on the green lawn, and a high festival of summer glory celebrating itself in light and bloom, in clouded borders and murmuring symphonies, in all the grand material of Nature's jubilee.

And this beautiful world had come back to her—the most take possession, as it were, of it. No one but herself was stirring in the house as she stole down stairs and out through the long library window—greatly to the dismay of a yawning housemaid, who found it unpleasant half-an-hour later—and made her way through round-headed groves faint with sweet dew, brilliant with blossom, into the lanes and meadows where young Summer laughed and frolicked like a happy, careless child. Holding her straw hat in her hand that she might lose none of the balmy freshness of the morning, she wandered on, without choosing her path, through dewy dingles "sweet with greenness," past copse full of wild flowers and woods of young leaves where the sunlight played at hide-and-seek, and then she found herself at the foot of Sir Walter's Hill. The early mist was hanging like a glittering silver veil over the fair face of the mountain, and as Olive mounted up it lifted slowly, and the golden sunshine kissed the young green beeches and the autumn firs.

Olive had not seen here since the merry winter weather, not since the day when she had brought home to herself all her weakness, and had commenced the desperate struggle of the spring. She had thought sometimes she could never bear to see the spot again; but now she wondered to find how the swelling flood-side of her recovered feeling had swept away the bitterness of the memory with the rest.

"And now for work," she said, as she started forward upon the thrummed ground. "A life of work will be easy. I must find work. I must fill my head and hands before—"

An instinct told her that a dangerous reactionary crisis would come.

We miss a great grief—miss it as a mental occupation, I mean. After the first sense of great deliverance, after the first moment of release, we are conscious of a void—at absorbing interest is withdrawn from our daily life. If we are wise we do as Olive did—we hasten to fill up our emptied minds and energies with wholesome thought and work. If we are foolish we waste God's mercy, and let the old sorrow seek back upon us in a sort of chronic form, without its first dignity—a faint, pining, selfish imitation of the grand discipline of life's ending. And in our lonely moments of sorrow this creature, and keep the sickly life carefully in it, so that our own hearts and minds grow as faint and weak as it.

When the strong agony which must have its way is once over, let us take up the life which has come back to us and so it. The wounds which we bring out of such death, recover must be always open to us, but when God has so ordered it, let us be content to keep them hidden. There must be a locked chamber in our hearts where, when we are strong enough, we may seal it alone, and reverently hold communion with our past, but where we must not seek to dwell always. Olive was turning the key upon this chamber, she knew it would be long ere she might venture in. Miss Urelda met her as she came up upon the terrace with her hands full of little flowers, and the aromatic scent of the firs gave her a freshening still about her unweary heart.

"Ah, Urelda, I have found a bee-crozier up on the chalk bank behind the lawn-park. I must go down to Miss Hetty after breakfast and show it to her. You remember how she was waiting to see me again?"

Miss Urelda's heart sang a psalm of thanksgiving as she followed her along into the breakfast-room. Miss Hetty was standing with a green parasol in her hand, and a white pocket-hand-

kerchief tied over her cap, superintending the transplanting of her geraniums and fuchsias from the little greenhouse to the flower-borders. She turned at the sound of the opening gate, and, bustling down the garden path, met Olive near a great blue bush that shed pale, fragrant stars upon the neatly-kept gravel-walk.

"My dear, I am so glad to see you. I heard you go by last night, so late! I always know the sound of the Armistage carriage. How well you look! Tell me all about the grand things you have seen in London. Are you tired, or shall we stroll down the garden? It is pleasant out this morning."

Olive was not tired, and she liked to stroll down Miss Hetty's garden at all times. A dear old-fashioned garden it was, where everything grew as it liked, unless, indeed, it liked to be very inconvenient, and then it was very tenderly dealt with, clipped or tied back with as little disruption to its "own sweet will" as possible. There were squares of beautifully smooth lawn, with a sun-dial in the middle, and a spreading mulberry-tree just bursting into leaf at the end. There were all sorts of old-fashioned flowers, and flowers, and flowers, and London pride, and York and Lancaster roses; tall white lilies, and hollyhocks, and sweet-williams; the round white balls of the guelder rose, Solomon's seal, pink and purple columbines, and, in its season, long pendulous bunches of scarlet geraniums, and pale green balls of bladder-snail. Then there were bushes of sweetbrier, lavender, rosemary, and "old man's pepper," and great bits of pungent thyme, and beds of woodruff—all the garden perfumes which our grandmothers and grandfathers prized so highly. One peculiarity of Miss Hetty's garden was that when you thought you had done with the flowers, and wandered down a silver walk, or along a row of apple fruit-trees, with candelabras and lettuce on the other side, you came suddenly upon a border-bordered flower-bed set in front of an arbor, over which tangles of scented woodbine mingled with great bunches of white and damask roses, so delicate grape-like clusters of pale wisteria. And whether flower-garden, or fruit or vegetable, long pendulous bunches of scarlet geraniums, and pale green balls of bladder-snail. 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